

New academy to send S'pore students overseas for internship at startups

Overseas internships in 17 cities will be open to more than 1,300 students from autonomous universities

Singapore

TO groom future innovators with a global view, a new academy has been set up to send Singapore students abroad for internships at startups or companies that undertake entrepreneurship and innovation.

Finance Minister Heng Swee Keat announced this at the opening of this year's Singapore Week of Innovation and Technology (Switch).

He said the Global Innovation Alliance Innovators Academy, which was launched by the Economic Development Board (EDB), is one of several new initiatives being rolled out to get innovators in Singapore to develop their tech capabilities and collaborate with others globally.

The academy will facilitate overseas internships in 17 cities for more than 1,300 students from the autonomous universities over the next few years.

Mr Heng said: "By exposing Singapore students to a diverse range of innovation ecosystems abroad, the Innovators Academy hopes to groom future innovators and business leaders with a global perspective."

To grow Singapore's quantum engineering sector, the National Research Foundation (NRF) has also developed the National Quantum Engineering Programme, launched to translate quantum science into industry-ready solutions.

The S\$25 million programme will be set up and hosted in the National University of Singapore, said Mr

Heng. It will conduct research in areas such as quantum cryptography, to safeguard against cybersecurity threats, advanced manufacturing capability, and enhanced imaging and sensing technology.

Mr Heng said Switch – Asia's flagship tech and innovation gathering organised by NRF and Enterprise Singapore – provides the opportunity for the exchange of ideas and innovation across sectors and countries. It features exhibitions and activities along themes such as technology, entrepreneurship, venture funding and tech in lifestyle.

Among the exhibits are devices that perform automated image analysis for eye diseases, artificial intelligence-driven robots, and software that can recognise emotion.

Mr Heng said: "We are happy to catalyse this convergence of minds, from many backgrounds and communities. There is a global consensus that technology and innovation can improve the lives of people around the world."

"But these needs of different communities are complex and diverse. We believe that by assembling a wide range of perspectives and expertise, we can understand these needs better and create solutions for them."

This year's event sees an Asean-China track introduced into the line-up of activities, in line with Singapore as chair of Asean and the deepening Asean-China cooperation in areas such as digital economy and smart cities, said Mr Heng.



Singapore had issued a road map with France in July, for increased cooperation in digital innovation, Internet governance and cybersecurity. Later this month, Singapore will also host the Australian Festival of Innovation.

"Through cultivating strong inter-

national networks like these, Singapore can act as a springboard for regional enterprises embarking on international expansion," Mr Heng added.

The third iteration of Switch will run till Thursday at Marina Bay Sands Convention Centre, and is expected to attract more than 10,000 visitors.

EyeRIS CEO Lai Teik Kin demonstrating a deep-learning system for diabetic retinopathy and related eye diseases to Finance Minister Heng Swee Keat and Foreign Affairs Minister Vivian Balakrishnan. BT PHOTO: GAVIN FOO